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Our main objective was to make it feed. In two nesting boxes were young English sparrows of which we wished to dispose. We placed one in the cage. Instantly the snake seized it by the body, coiled about it, released mouth hold, sought the head, began crushing with coils and finally began swallowing the bird quite rapidly for a snake. There were practically no feathers on the bird. Thereafter it ate young English sparrows. It usually went through the process we have described, a truly constrictor habit. Rarely, however, it would seize the bird by leg or head and swallow it at once with no coiling about the bird at all. Is its natural habit feeding on young birds of the desert?

As a pet I consider it the finest native snake of the states. It is gentle, never bites, is clean and glossy of skin, coils into a ball or up the arm and is a beautifully patterned snake. This individual was befriended by the whole neighborhood of children.

A. H. WRIGHT,
Ithaca, N. Y.

XIPHISTER VERSUS XIPHIDION

In 1859 Charles Girard gave the name *Xiphidion* to a well-marked genus of California blennies. Because of the name *Xiphidium* given to a genus of grasshoppers by Burmeister in 1838, in 1879 I introduced the new name *Xiphister* for the California fish-genus. But on the theory that *Xiphidion* and *Xiphidium* were different names, being spelled differently, Jordan and Evermann reverted in 1898 to *Xiphidion*. Mr. Morgan Hebard of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science informs me that the genus of grasshoppers was first named *Xiphidion* by Serville in 1831, *Xiphidium* being a purist correction. The name *Xiphister* should, therefore, stand for *Xiphister mucosus* and its allies.

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EDITED BY J. T. NICHOLS, American Museum of Natural History

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